



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF CHICAGO

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CONTACT:

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

press@cityofchicago.org

CHICAGO EARNS GOLD MEDAL FOR POLICIES IMPROVING QUALITY OF LIFE

CityHealth ratings show Chicago is one of five US cities setting gold standards in public health

Mayor Rahm Emanuel and the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) Commissioner Dr. Julie Morita today accepted a Gold Medal award from the [CityHealth](#) initiative for implementing policies that improve the health, well-being and economic opportunity of residents. For the second year in a row, Chicago is one of just five cities nationally to receive a gold medal among the 40 cities ranked in CityHealth's updated city ratings. Chicago will be awarded a gold medal at the U.S. Conference of Mayors 86th Annual Meeting in Boston, Massachusetts.

"Chicago is proud to win a gold medal for our health policies, and we strive to be the gold standard for cities when it comes to public policy that improves residents' lives," said Mayor Rahm Emanuel. "I view this gold medal not just as a recognition of what Chicago has accomplished, but as a challenge to redouble our efforts and ensure our entire city has a clean bill of health today, tomorrow and for generations to come."

Chicago received an overall gold medal for improving people's health and quality of life, as well as individual gold medals for successful policies in affordable housing, alcohol sales control, complete streets, smoke-free indoor air and raising the age of tobacco sales to 21. The city also received silver medals in earned sick leave, healthy food procurement and high-quality universal pre-kindergarten.

"Chicago is showing national leadership by establishing policies that increase opportunities for individuals to lead healthier lives like increasing access to healthy foods, smoke-free environments, universal pre-k and requiring employers to provide earned sick leave. These policies increase Chicago residents' chances of getting and staying healthy." said CDPH Commissioner, Julie Morita, M.D.

CityHealth, an initiative of the de Beaumont Foundation and Kaiser Permanente, issued its recent report analyzing the nation's 40 largest cities have nine key policies that experts say help residents lead healthier lives and make communities thrive. For each of these nine policies, CityHealth awarded each city a gold, silver, bronze, or no medal, according to the quality of that policy. The group also awarded an overall medal to each city based on how many policy medals were earned.

"Policy is a powerful lever for change at the city level," said Shelley Hearne, CityHealth's president. "By earning a gold medal for smart policymaking, Chicago is demonstrating leadership across nine pragmatic policy areas, which have been proven to help millions of people live longer, better lives."

121 NORTH LASALLE STREET, ROOM 507, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60602

Chicago earned a gold medal overall, demonstrating that city leaders understand the role of policy as a valuable prescription for public health, and a tool to make cities vibrant, prosperous places to live.

Some of the policies that earned medals include:

Affordable Housing

Since 2014, the city has supported more than 40,000 affordable housing units with \$1.3 billion in coordinated public and private investments through programs like the Affordable Requirements Ordinance, the Chicago Low Income Housing Trust Fund, the Affordable Housing Opportunity Fund, and numerous programs that build and preserve homes for families earning up to 60 percent of area median income.

Complete Streets

Under the leadership of Mayor Emanuel, the city launched its Vision Zero Chicago Action Plan in 2017. The data-driven, multi-agency approach looks at traffic safety as a public health challenge with the goal of improving safety for everyone using Chicago's robust transportation system, whether they are walking, biking, driving or on transit. Projects also improved pedestrian, biker and driver safety, installing new high-visibility infrastructure to reduce conflicts at intersections.

Earned Sick Leave

In 2016, City Council passed Mayor Emanuel's ordinance that would allow employees to earn paid sick leave, providing a meaningful benefit to thousands of Chicago families with a limited impact on employer costs. In June 2015, Mayor Emanuel appointed the Working Families Task Force to investigate the issues facing working families in Chicago and develop recommendations to strengthen protections for working Chicagoans.

Healthy Food Procurement

The city's Good Food Purchasing Program (GFPP) calls for developing strong procurement standards that prioritize nutrition, environmental sustainability, a valued workforce, local agriculture and economies, and animal welfare. This GFPP builds on the Mayor's efforts on issues including urban agriculture, food deserts, farmers markets, mobile markets, healthy vending, and support for small-scale food processors in low-income communities.

High-Quality, Universal Pre-Kindergarten

Since taking office, Mayor Emanuel has made early childhood education a top priority, from expanding access to full-day kindergarten for every student to creating the first of its kind online preschool application to make it easier for parents to access programs. This month, the Mayor announced plans to implement universal full-day pre-kindergarten for four-year-olds, starting with an expansion for an additional 3,700 children next school year in CPS. Access to universal full-day pre-kindergarten will roll out more each year over the next four years, prioritizing communities with the most children in need. By the fall of 2021 pre-kindergarten will be universal for all four-year-old children in Chicago. Once implemented, Mayor Emanuel will have added 3.5 years of classroom time since 2011, when he began shifting away from the shortest school day and the shortest school year in Illinois.

Smoke-Free Indoor Air

Mayor Emanuel has taken a series of steps to stand up to Big Tobacco and reduce children's use of tobacco products. Under his leadership, the City incorporated e-cigarettes as part of the Clean Indoor Air Ordinance, became the first big city to impose a tax on e-cigarettes, raised the tobacco purchasing age to 21, banned the sale of flavored tobacco near high schools and banned redemption of tobacco coupons, among numerous other initiatives.

***CityHealth**, an initiative of the de Beaumont Foundation and Kaiser Permanente, provides leaders with a package of evidence-based policy solutions that will help millions of people live longer, better lives in vibrant, prosperous communities. CityHealth will regularly evaluate cities on the number and strength of their policies. <http://www.cityhealth.org/>*

***The de Beaumont Foundation** is dedicated to improving the capacity and performance of the U.S. public health system, and equipping public health agencies to thrive in a transforming health landscape. In so doing, we aspire to improve the health of the populations of the communities they serve across the U.S. <http://www.debeaumont.org/>*

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